

CIACO

NID 81

October 17, 1981

POLAND: Pressure on Solidarity

Party leader Kania's attack yesterday on Solidarity, combined with rank-and-file pressure not to bow to the government, will stiffen the union leaders' posture in negotiations with the regime.

Kania's call for a prohibition against strikes during the fall and winter in his speech to the party's Central Committee was partly for economic reasons. This proposal and the purge of liberals now under way, however, were also in response to hardline critics' demands that he act more forcefully against Solidarity.

Union leaders will react vigorously to this unexpected strike ban and will view it as a major drawback in their economic talks with the government, which began on Thursday. As a matter of principle they would not risk the anger of the rank and file by surrendering--even for a short time--Solidarity's chief weapon. If the regime presses this issue--such a measure must be authorized by the parliament--Solidarity probably will feel compelled to follow through with its threatened general strike next week.

This most explicit attack by Kania on the union will force its leaders to defend themselves against the charge of having political ambitions--something union moderates had tried to play down at the recent congress. Kania, seconded by Politburo member Olszowski, accused elements in Solidarity of wrecking the economy in order to take over political power.

The rash of wildcat strikes and strike alerts in at least eight provinces over shortages of food, especially meat, will put pressure on Solidarity to avoid making concessions during the talks. The union is asking for increased control over the distribution, export, and rationing of food, and Solidarity's chief negotiator said that, unless the talks ended "satisfactorily," Solidarity would call the general strike. The government, meanwhile, yesterday rejected Solidarity's proposal for a government-union "social council" to oversee the economy.

The government does not have the capability to increase food supplies and cover meat rationing commitments. Despite the recent procurement price hike, farmers have

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Approved for Release
Date AUG 1993

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contracted to supply only about one-half as much meat to the state in the next three months as they did in the same period last year; they can get much higher prices in black market sales. In addition, the government's chronic problem in supplying farmers with coal in exchange for meat will become more difficult because of the drop in coal output resulting from the dispute between the government and the union over Saturday pay for miners. [REDACTED]

Military Situation

Yesterday the Polish Government, in a move at least partly intended to show its resolve to act, announced a two-month extension of the terms of service of conscripts who would have been released next week. Induction of new conscripts apparently will proceed as scheduled. [REDACTED]

The regime justified the extension by citing the need for the military to increase its contribution to the national economy, but the involuntary extension of service will cause some resentment among the servicemen concerned. Some apparently fear that they have been retained to ease implementation of martial law. In a letter published by Solidarity, some soldiers urged a public protest and expressed their concern that they were being retained "to prepare us for taking part in a confrontation on the side that does not suit us." [REDACTED]

Retention of trained personnel will increase the strength and preparedness of Polish military forces. Units can be kept at increased strength without a callup of reservists. Any troops sent to assist civilian enterprises, however, would have to be recalled if their units were to be brought up to full strength. [REDACTED]

There is no indication of a major mobilization of Polish forces. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] one Polish division, one Soviet division in Poland and one in Czechoslovakia, and two divisions in the western USSR showed no unusual activity. [REDACTED]